



INCLUSION AROUND THE WORLD

Inclusion International (II) is a global federation of family-based organizations advocating for the human rights of people with intellectual disabilities worldwide. II represents over 200 member federations in 115 countries throughout five regions Middle East, Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia Pacific.

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Welcome to a special issue of Inclusion International's newsletter. As you will see from the various articles in this edition, the work of Inclusion International (II) since the Berlin Congress has been expanding and building on the strategic plan which was approved by the II General Assembly last June. The updated Strategic Plan lays out II's priorities for implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the areas of Inclusive Education, Legal Capacity, Living in the Community and the role of Families. II's implementation strategy over the next two years leading up to the General Assembly and International Conference on Living in the Community (Washington, DC, November, 2012) includes five major activities:

- ❖ II will host with its regional associations in each of the 5 regions a regional forum for families and self-advocates to learn from each other about initiatives in different countries that promote and implement aspects of the Convention;
- ❖ II will draw on the knowledge and expertise of its volunteers and member organizations to support country level initiatives to implement the CRPD (see article on II's launch of the CATs);
- ❖ II will in partnership with the International Disability Alliance (see President's Report and Report from the IDA Chair) monitor and contribute to the work of the Committee of Experts of the CRPD
- ❖ II will work with UN agencies and development agencies to identify opportunities to include and promote the rights of people with intellectual disabilities in their work.
- ❖ II will launch a Global Campaign to promote Article 19 *The Right to Live in the Community*. (Watch the Inclusion International Website www.inclusion-international.org and newsletters for more details).

The newsletter is one of the ways that we communicate with our member organizations and other partners. If you have questions about any of these initiatives or if you would like to become involved in any of these activities of II listed please contact us at: info@inclusion-international.org

Inclusion International first Regional Forum for Families took place Bogotá, Colombia on November, 2010

Inclusion International, in collaboration with Asdown Colombia, Inclusion Interamericana, and Fundación Saldarriaga Concha organized a regional forum for families in Bogota, Colombia 10-13 November.

Over 300 people participated at **The Road to Inclusion: Together we can make the change!** and the event was a huge success. This is the first of five regional forums to be held by Inclusion International in the next two years to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities supporting the work of its member organizations and other organizations of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families in implementing the changes required. All information, documents and tools generated from these forums, will contribute to II's global strategy to promote the Convention.

A combination of regional and international presenters introduced the topics in plenary and participants broke into focus sessions on each of the key areas. Key issues were raised and discussed during these sessions and the information collected will feed into II's work on promoting the Convention. More information about this event is available at www.inclusion-international.org

Inclusion International to hold Second Regional Forum for Families in Johannesburg, South Africa on 2-3 March, 2011

Inclusion International held a regional forum for families and self-advocates "**Transforming Rights into Action: Africa in Focus**" in Johannesburg, South Africa on 2-3 March, 2011. The forum was organised in collaboration with Inclusion Africa, Disabled Children's Action Group, Down Syndrome South Africa and the Norwegian Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities.

This is one of the five regional events Inclusion International will hold in the next two years to identify and raise awareness of the issues impacting the social, economic and political exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities from their communities. The main objective is to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and support the work of its member organizations and other organizations of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families in implementing the changes required. All information, documents and tools generated in these forums, will contribute to Inclusion International's global strategy to promote the Convention.

Like the previous Forum held in Bogota, Colombia in November 2010, the African Forum also focused on Inclusion International's 4 key priority areas:

- Preamble on the Role of Families (family support)

- Article 12: Equal Recognition Before the Law - People with intellectual disabilities have legal capacity and have the right to support in order to exercise their capacity
- Article 19: Living Independently and Being Included in the Community - People with intellectual disabilities have the right to choose to live in the community with the supports required
- Article 24: Education – Students with intellectual disabilities have the right to be included in the regular school with the supports they require.

Representatives from over 16 countries from all regions of Africa participated as well as invited guest speakers such as Ms Edah Maina, a members of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, has agreed to participate in the event.

For the program and further information about the forum visit www.inclusion-international.org

Inclusion International Participates in VALID Have a Say Conference (Victoria, Australia)

Klaus Lachwitz (President), Ralph Jones (Secretary General) and Connie Laurin-Bowie (Executive Director) visited Victoria to participate in the VALID Have a Say Conference. The Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc (VALID) www.valid.org.au is an advocacy group for adults with intellectual disabilities and their families. The Conference brought together hundreds of self-advocates and families to exchange ideas and “have a say”. Klaus and Connie delivered a joint keynote address on the topic of legal capacity and the right as articulated in Article 12 of the UN Convention to make decisions for oneself and to have supports to do so. Supported decision making is really about respecting the self-determination of each individual by providing them with the supports that they need in the form of information, communication or personal support to make decisions and have those decisions respected.

While in Australia, Klaus and Connie met with the National Council on Intellectual Disabilities (NCID), The Law Reform Commission, Officials from the Government of Victoria and the Australian Disability and Development Consortium. Inclusion International representatives worked with the leadership of VALID to identify areas of collaboration for the future both in Asia Pacific and globally. If you are interested in more details about any of these meeting feel free to contact us at info@inclusion-international.org

Inclusion International Launches Campaign to Promote the Right to Live in the Community

Last December Inclusion International (II), with its member organizations in over 115 countries, launched a campaign to promote Article 19 of the CRPD, Living in the Community. Article 19 ensures that people with disabilities have the right to live in the community with the supports they require, with equal access to community services such as education, health care, transportation, etc. This commitment has significant implications for governments, communities and service providers. It requires that we collectively address the current reality of the lives of people with disabilities who live in situations of isolation, segregation, confinement and dependence, whether in an institution or in “institutionalized” living conditions. The purpose of the two year campaign is to:

- Promote awareness of the isolation, segregation, confinement and vulnerability faced by people who have an intellectual disability who are excluded from their communities whether in institutions or in “institutionalized” living conditions;
- Share experiences and build understanding of the essential elements of *community inclusion and community living*; and
- share strategies for national and international initiatives that move people from “institutionalized living” to community inclusion

For persons who have an intellectual disability and their families, one of the most important rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is the right to live independently and be supported in the community (Article 19). All too often, persons who have an intellectual disability have been deprived of their liberty and prevented from making any choices in their lives because of being confined to institutions. Enormous pressure has often been placed on families of people with intellectual disabilities who have faced huge challenges to meet the needs of their disabled family member. In many cases, institutions have been the only option provided.

In order for people with an intellectual disability to be able to exercise all the other rights protected in the CRPD, they and their families require a range of supports and services. In some countries there is a need to close institutions and provide supports for the people who live in the community. In other countries, where institutions are not prevalent, there is a need to develop a full range of supports and services that respect the CRPD.

Over the period of the two year campaign, Inclusion International will:

- conduct regional workshops in each of the five regions of II to identify and raise awareness of the issues impacting the social, economic and political exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities from their communities;
- support national level initiatives to promote living in the community;

- collect and share information about the current exclusion, isolation and institutionalization of people with intellectual disabilities;
- collect and share information and strategies for addressing exclusion and building inclusive communities;
- develop a global report on the current situation of people with intellectual disabilities and strategies used to advance and build inclusive communities;
- co-host with The Arc of the United States an International Conference on the Right to Live in the Community in October, 2012 (Washington, DC)

For More Information Contact:

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Inclusion International encourages participation from its members in the process of monitoring the implementation of the CRPD

Inclusion International as a part of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) is encouraging its member organizations to participate in the process of monitoring the implementation of the CRPD in order to ensure that voices of people with intellectual disability and their families are heard and that our particular issues are recognized. Inclusion International will coordinate with the IDA in Geneva who will provide technical and logistical support to DPOs and DPO coalitions who prepare and submit reports to the Committee of Experts.

In article 34 of the CRPD, a committee on the rights of persons with disabilities was established. Its mandate is to consider the reports of state parties.

Each State Party to the CRPD is required to submit **a comprehensive (initial) report** to the CRPD Committee composed of a **common core document**, which provides general information common to all human rights treaty bodies, and a **treaty-specific document**, which contains information specific to the implementation of the CRPD.

The CRPD requires that civil society be fully involved in the monitoring process and allows the Committee to invite “other competent bodies” to provide expert advice on the implementation of the CRPD in areas falling within the scope of their mandate. The Committee’s working methods welcome the submission of reports and other documentation by international, regional, national or local DPOs in order to have a better understanding of the problems in the implementation of the CRPD at national level. DPOs should therefore consider preparing reports on the implementation of the CRPD in their country.

In order to obtain a comprehensive picture as to the implementation of the CRPD in a country, the Committee needs reliable information from DPOs as to the actual situation at national level.

Preparing a report gives DPOs a unique opportunity to bring their concerns to the international legal body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the CRPD. It empowers national DPOs by offering them a legitimate external source to which disability issues can be raised and addressed. It also encourages public scrutiny of governmental policies and can bring an open debate on the status of persons with disabilities in a country. A report prepared by DPOs can also create a window of opportunity to have a serious dialogue with senior government officials about the States efforts to comply with the CRPD and help to influence the national-level agenda.

For further information or explanation of this process please feel free to contact us at info@inclusion-international.org

Inclusion International Convention Action Teams (CATs)

As a part of Inclusion International's strategy to promote implementation of the Convention II set up a process through which the CATs can support our national member organizations to participate in the implementation of the Convention. As a member of Inclusion International your organization can participate and benefit from these activities by contributing to a Convention Action Team or by sharing information and ideas about issues related to the implementation of the Convention in your country.

The Convention Action Teams (CATs) were established in 2010 and they will continue their work this year. Since they were established each of the teams has been holding conference calls to initiate discussions on working strategies and how Inclusion International can help to facilitate the work.

A number of the CAT members have also been involved in activities and processes around the world in each of the 4 priority areas of II (education, legal capacity, living in the community and families) and have started to use a report structure so that Inclusion international can begin to collect information about what they are learning when they are visiting a country and take part of a process in a country around implementation of the Convention. The CAT website www.iicats.org has been created as a platform for sharing this information and for members to seek advice or share information about issues related to the implementation of the Convention in their countries.

**For more issues of the Inclusion International
Newsletter visit our website
www.inclusion-international.org**

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